

NO COMPROMISE

CONVICTIONS



BIG IDEA: “No one will ever find out. After all, cheaters do prosper.” “Everyone does it. You don’t want to feel left out of all the fun, do you?” “Just this once?” “Let your conscience be your guide.” “It’s not like it’s a big sin. God will forgive you.”

Every day, you and your group members are challenged with compromise in many areas such as the moral, ethical, and sexual. The attacks on their integrity and character can be numerous yet subtle. In the area of compromise and rationalization with sin, the enemy indeed “prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking those whom he may devour.”

As we look at Daniel 3, we discover important principles on how to respond to difficult situations when faced with compromise.



DESIRED LIFE CHANGE: This study will help your group members identify situations where they are tempted to rationalize sinful or questionable behavior, and help them to understand the importance of responding biblically in those situations.



AUDIENCE: This lesson is designed for students who are seeking to develop biblically-based convictions.



LEADER'S PREPARATION: Know the background of the book of Daniel and specifically the context of chapter 3. Also, familiarize yourself with all the quotes and survey results in the study and use them as needed for discussion or interaction. NOTE: This lesson closely parallels the INTERACTA studies on RELATIVISM and GREY AREAS, but is unique in the fact that it points specifically to the need to cultivate convictions and respond biblically. Be prepared to share your story related to this topic. Let your group see how these truths have changed your life.



AT A GLANCE

As your group interacts in this study, they will think . . .

This is my **WORLD:** I often face situations where I am tempted to rationalize or justify my behavior, or compromise my convictions.

This is my **NEED:** I need to be obedient to God’s Word (regardless of my circumstances or situation) and consistently live my life based on biblical convictions.

This is my **ANSWER:** By living my life based on biblical convictions and standards, I demonstrate: 1) my obedience to God, 2) my desire to live without compromise to biblical truth, and 3) my desire to do His will.

This is the **DIFFERENCE:** By having objective standards (i.e., the Word of God) as my guideposts, I will be able to recognize potentially compromising situations and respond biblically.

This is what I’ll **DO:** As I internalize biblically-based convictions, I will replace subjective patterns of decision-making with objective standards derived from God’s Word.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION - WHY IS THIS STUDY IMPORTANT?



The passage in chapter 3 of Daniel is one of the best biblical examples of how to respond in a Godly manner when faced with compromise or rationalization. The examples in courage of Daniel’s three young friends provide us with insight, perspective, and principles to live by as we are faced with difficult and potentially compromising situations each day on the college campus.

The negative consequences of giving-in to compromise are many, some of which are discussed to in this study.

But the benefits of responding biblically in tough situations are numerous - God is pleased; it demonstrates obedience; we stay in God’s will; it build our character; we avoid harmful consequences, to highlight a few.

When your group members start to deepen in their recognition of compromising situations and choose to respond biblically, they’re on their way to being men and women that walk with the lord having “NO COMPROMISE.”



NO COMPROMISE



TOOLBOX

- THINK
- OBSERVE
- CLOSE-UP
- WRITE
- DISCUSS
- FEELINGS
- BRAINSTORM
- REFERENCE
- PASSAGE
- ARTICLE
- BIG IDEA
- CROSSROAD

1 READ

YOU MAKE THE CALL . . .

SCENE 1

It's near the end of the semester. You realize that you're failing biology. If you do, you lose your scholarship. Your roommate happens to have a work-study job in the biology department undergraduate office and helps out with all the printing the department does. They have easy access to a copy of the final. Your roommate offers to obtain a copy for you. "No one will ever know," your roommate says. "After all, you don't want to lose your scholarship, do you?"

SCENE 2

Your best friend is a computer whiz and can make anything with a computer, even fake I.D. cards that look exactly like the real thing. Since you're not 21 yet, you can't go to many of the hottest clubs or nightspots near campus. Your best friend asks, "Do you want me to make you one? You don't have to go to these places and drink. You can just mix and mingle, and have a good time. You don't want to miss out on a lot of good times, do you?"

SCENE 3

You've been dating a person exclusively for 6 months now. The topic of marriage has come up. They are pressuring you to have sex. You think to yourself, "Why not?"

"It's only wrong if you get caught." - Michael Moore.

Rutgers University junior, author of "Cheating 101: The Benefits and Fundamentals of Earning the Easy 'A'".

How do you respond?
 What initial thoughts run through your mind?
 How could a person try to justify or rationalize their behavior in each situation?

Let's look at some people that lived with "No Compromise" . . .

2 ASK

POSSIBLE RESPONSES:

TEST - "I'll do it just this once. After all, God will forgive me."
 "God wants me to keep my scholarship. He'll understand."

I.D. - "After all, I'm not going to drink anything alcoholic, just meet new people. I'm not breaking any laws."

RELATIONSHIP - "We're in love and committed to each other. We're going to get married anyway."

3 TRANSITION

FOR THE LEADER: Refer to the CONTEXT box and bio boxes as needed.

1 READ

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

He came to the throne about the time that Daniel was taken captive into Babylon, and was the most powerful and distinguished king of the Babylonian empire.

2 STATE: Summarize each section of scripture.

SHADRACH, MESHACH, ABEDNEGO

Daniel's three young friends who were also taken captive. They were to undergo a rigorous course of training after which they were to enter positions of responsibility in the royal court.

3 ASK

OBSERVATION

4 ASK & LOOK

5 ASK

6 ASK

Daniel 3

3:1A,4-6 King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, ninety feet high and nine feet wide, ... Then the herald loudly proclaimed, "This is what you are commanded to do, O peoples, nations and men of every language: As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music, you must fall down and worship the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace."

3:12,15B-18 But there are some Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon—Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego—who pay no attention to you, O king. They neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up." ... But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?" Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."

3:19,22,25,27 Then Nebuchadnezzar was furious with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and his attitude toward them changed. He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual ... The king's command was so urgent and the furnace so hot that the flames of the fire killed the soldiers who took up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, ... He said, "Look I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods."

3:28-30 Then Nebuchadnezzar said, "Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king's command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God. Therefore I decree that the people of any nation or language who say anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and abednego be cut into pieces and their houses turned into piles of rubble, for no other god can save in this way." Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the province of Babylon.

CONTEXT

Daniel the Prophet
According to Daniel 1:6, Daniel was one of the youths taken from Jerusalem to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar (probably around 605 B.C.) to be trained for service in the king's palace.

Daniel the Book
One of the most prophetic books of the Old Testament, the book of Daniel provides the basic framework for Jewish and Gentile history from the time of Nebuchadnezzar until the second advent of Christ. It is divided into two parts: the first deals with Daniel's visions under Nebuchadnezzar, and his personal history to the reign of Cyrus (chapters 1-6); the second part deals with Daniel's great prophetic visions (chapters 7-12).

Daniel Chapter 3
Chapter 1 dealt with the training of Jewish youths for the king's service and Daniel's first test of obedience. Chapter 2 recounts Daniel's interpretation of the king's dream and his resultant promotion.

- What did the king's decree command the people to do?
- What did God's commandment say? (see Exodus 20:4-6).
- How did the three respond? Why?
- Describe the king's response: 1) to their refusal to worship the image; 2) during the fire; and 3) after they came out of the furnace.

RATIONALIZATIONS

- "We don't have to turn from worship of the true God, or make a profession to this image, but only to bow down to it."
- "We are not required to become idolaters but only to bow once. We can do that quickly with mental reservation and then confess it! God will forgive us."
- "The king is absolute and we would be just following his orders. The king would be responsible and God will forgive us."
- "Nebuchadnezzar has treated us well and honored us. This would show our appreciation even if it does strain our consciences a bit."
- "We are in a strange land and must follow their customs. After all, 'When in Babylon, do as the Babylonians do.'"
- "What about our ancestors? They set up idols all over the land. It must be okay because everybody's doing it."
- "If we bow to the image, our lives will be spared and we will continue to occupy our strategic positions in government and be able to help our people when they need it. Doesn't the end justify the means?"

PRINCIPLES

THE SURVEY SAYS

"How do you determine between right and wrong?"

- 57% - "I trust my feelings or my conscience."
- 18% - "I use my mind or my common sense."
- 4% - "I use the Bible as my standard."

(tabulated from Daytona Beach BIG BREAK survey results)

PATTERNS

- "I always do it this way."
- "It seems quick, easy, and convenient."
- "I just felt like it was o.k. for me."
- "My professor says..."
- "Nothing happened the last time I did that."
- "This is America in the 90s. Everyone thinks it's o.k."

TRADITION
 EXPEDIENCY
 EMOTIONS
 EDUCATION/EXPERTS
 EXPERIENCE
 CULTURE

- 1 STATE:** Put yourself in their shoes.
- 2 BRAINSTORM:** What possible thoughts/rationalizations might have been going through their mind as they were faced with compromise.
- 3 ASK:** What can we learn from their example?
POSSIBLE RESPONSES: I need to be devoted to God's Word regardless of my circumstances or situation. God will honor obedience to His commands. There may be times when I have to stand alone and take a stand for what I know is right. My stand might be unpopular with others, but I will choose to obey God.
- 4 TRANSITION:** Let's now examine some of our patterns of decision-making.
- 5 ASK:** What do these phrases reveal is the basis for making the decision?
- 6 ASK:** Which of these patterns do you tend to use? Why?
- 7 ASK:** Examine the patterns collectively. What is the problem or shortcoming with them?
- 8 RESPONSE:** The problem with each statement is that we are the one that sets the standard. We become the final authority of what is right or wrong, or what is appropriate. We ignore what God says is best for us.
- 9 TRANSITION:** What we need to apply is a process, a way to change our pattern of rationalizing or compromising.

1 READ

2 BRAINSTORM: Why should we respond biblically in tough situations? What are some of the benefits for doing so? What are reasons that should properly motivate us?

POSSIBLE RESPONSES:

- It demonstrates obedience to God.
- My character is built.
- God is pleased.
- I avoid negative consequences.
- There is security in staying in God's will.
- I experience the fruit of the Spirit.
- I avoid disappointing God, myself, and others.
- It builds my confidence in doing what I know is right.

3 STATE, ASK: Choose one of the three scenarios from page 1.

What could be the end of the story if they chose to compromise? What could be the possible short-term and long-term results? What could the end result be if they chose to do right? What could be the possible short-term and long-term results?

4 ASK

5 WRITE: The steps that you will take.

PROCESS

- 1) **RECOGNIZE**, situations where you are tempted to rationalize or compromise.
- 2) **REALIZE** what God's Word has to say about the situation you face.
- 3) **REAFFIRM** your desire to be uncompromising.
- 4) **RESPOND**, biblically.

COMPROMISE!

"Clearly the youth of today didn't invent cheating, stealing, and lying, but they are perfecting it . . . In today's society, less than 2 percent of the high school and the college kids get caught. We're creating a society where cheaters do prosper, and we can't tell them, honestly, that honesty is the best policy."

-Ralph Wexler, vice president of the non-profit Joseph & Edna Josephson Institute of Ethics

WHY RESPOND BIBLICALLY?

THINK ABOUT IT

TO TELL THE TRUTH?

- Sixty-one percent of the high school students and 32 percent of the collegians said they had cheated on an exam during the past year.
- A third of the high school students and 16 percent of the college students admitted stealing something within the past year.
- More than a third said they would lie on a resume or job application to get work. Sixteen percent of the high school students and 18 percent of college students said they had already done so.

-from a two-year nationwide study (released in 1993) by the Josephson Institute of Ethics, surveying more than 6,000 high school and college students from more than 40 schools.

PERSONALIZE

Think of areas or situations in your own life where you are tempted to compromise. What steps do you need to take in order to respond biblically?

EXAMPLES FOR FURTHER STUDY:
 Daniel - Daniel 1,2,6
 Mordecai - Book of Esther

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture references are taken from the *New International Version*, ©1973, 1978, 1984 by the International Bible Society. Published by Zondervan Bible Publishers, Grand Rapids, Michigan.



BOOKS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Old Testament Survey – William Sanford La Sor, David Allen Hubbard, and Fredric William Bush (*Eerdmans*)

Unger's Bible Dictionary– Merrill Unger (*Moody Press*)

New Bible Dictionary– (*Tyndale*)

A Survey of Old Testament Introduction– Gleason L. Archer, Jr. (*Moody Press*)



TOPIC CONNECTIONS

Related *InterACTA* small group studies: *Shades of Gray; Go Figure; Don't Just Say No*

ADDITIONAL PREPARATION

If time permits, have your group work through the following exercise:

BRAINSTORM: What are some of the areas that you think Christian college students deal with in regard to compromise? List them. Some of these might include the following:

- Cheating on exams or quizzes
- Dating a non-Christian
- Having sex with the person they're dating
- "Padding" their resume (i.e., listing activities, organizations, or work experiences that they never were involved with)
- Having friends write term papers or take tests for them.

ASK: What could be the possible consequences if compromise is chosen?

ASK: What could be the possible consequences if they choose to do right?

ASK: What will it require for you to be an uncompromising student in all that you do—socially, academically, morally, etc.? Discuss some of your action points.

LOOK UP: Passages of Scripture that deal with the above issues to see what God has to say. Using a concordance, look at passages that deal with integrity, character, honesty, uprightness, etc. Some possible passages to explore are:

- Psalm 15:2
- Psalm 25:20-21
- Psalm 26:1
- Psalm 101
- Proverbs 10:9
- Proverbs 20:7

O V E R V I E W O F M E E T I N G T I M E



Planning your group session

Allocating your time

INTERACTION AS A GROUP	INTERACTION WITH THE STUDY & WORD	INTERACTION WITH GOD	UPCOMING INFORMATION	OTHER IDEAS
Ice breaker? Refreshments?	Provided. Add personal story?	Worship / Praise / Prayer time?	Next meeting? Special event?	Music / Video?
_____ min.	_____ min.	_____ min.	_____ min.	_____ min.

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